THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

Total sanitation campaign under Panchayati Raj

† 887. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the total sanitation campaign under the Panchayati Raj;

(b) the number of districts (Janpad) in Uttar Pradesh in which above campaign is being conducted;

(c) the names of districts for which State Government has requested the Central Government to release the next instalment of Centre's share under the above campaign; and

(d) the details of the decision taken by Central Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Information on the subject is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Funds sanctioned for rural development through panchayats

888. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that crores of rupees are being sanctioned for rural development through Panchayats;

(b) if so, how many stages are involved before the money sanctioned by Central Government reaches Panchayats;

(c) the steps being taken to cut down the number of stages/leaves; and

(d) the checks applied to ensure that the money given to Panchayats is spent for the purpose for which it was sanctioned?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Funds are allotted to Panchayati Raj Institutions under Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and Finance Commission grants. The XII Finance Commission has recommended grants amounting to Rs. 20,000 cores payable over the 5 year period 2005-10 to augment the Consolidated Fund of the States.

(b) to (d) The XII Finance Commission has stipulated defied guidelines for time bound allocation and release of rants of Panchayats within 15 days of their release to the States. The Grants will be released in two equal instalments in July and Jan. every year on receipt of certificates from the State Govt, regarding the allocation and release of funds to PRIs in a prescribed format. The States have been advised to inform the Government of India about the allocation share of each PRI at all levels before 31st October, 2005 for the release of the first six monthly instalment fo the year 2005-06. Each State Finance Secretary would be required to provide a certificate every year of the percentage of grants spent on schemes of water supply and sanitation by the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Government of India would withhold the amount short spent on the schemes of water supply and sanitation before the release of second instalment and the withheld amount would be subsequently reimbursed upon confirmation that the short spending has been made good in the subsequent period.

Each State is required to constitute a high level Committee to ensure proper utilization of funds as per the guidelines of XII Finance Commission. A Committee for the Panchayati Raj Institutions is also required to be constituted by the Govt, of India to monitor the release of grants. The Panchayat accounts would also be audited by the C&AG.

Detailed guidelines have also been laid down for the allocation of resources and proper monitoring and evaluation of their utilization under the SGRY scheme. Central assisance is released every year directly to the DRDAs/Zilla Parishads in two instalments subject to fuflfillment of certain conditions which include certificates from DRDAs/ZPs of the funds received, release of states' contribution and submission of audit reports of the previous year. The DRDAs/ZPs are required to distribute resources to Village Panchayats within 15 days of the receipt of funds by them from the Central or State Governments as the case may be. The State

Governments must release their matching share to the DRDAs/ZPs within 15 days of release of Central Assistance. Diversion of resources from one District to another is not permitted. The proposal for release of second instalment by DRDAs/ZPs complete in all respects should be submitted by 31 st December every year. Both physical and financial audits of schemes by local fund auditors or by Chartered Accountants listed in the panels of State Governments or AGs or C&AG are compulsory.

Unconstitutionai/illegal decisions by panchayats

† 889. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of unconstitutional and illegal decisions taken by several Panchayats in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the measures taken or being taken by Government to have control over such practices; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Government have not received any complaints of unconstitutional and illegal decisions taken by Panchayats in the country.

Panchayats as defined in Part-IX of the Constitution means only an institution by whatever name called of self-Government constituted under Article 243 B for the rural areas. It is for State Governments to take action under the law against unconstitutional or illegal decisions taken by other institutes calling themselves "panchayats".

Strengthening of Panchayati Raj system

890. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate some action plan to strenthen the Panchayati Raj system;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.